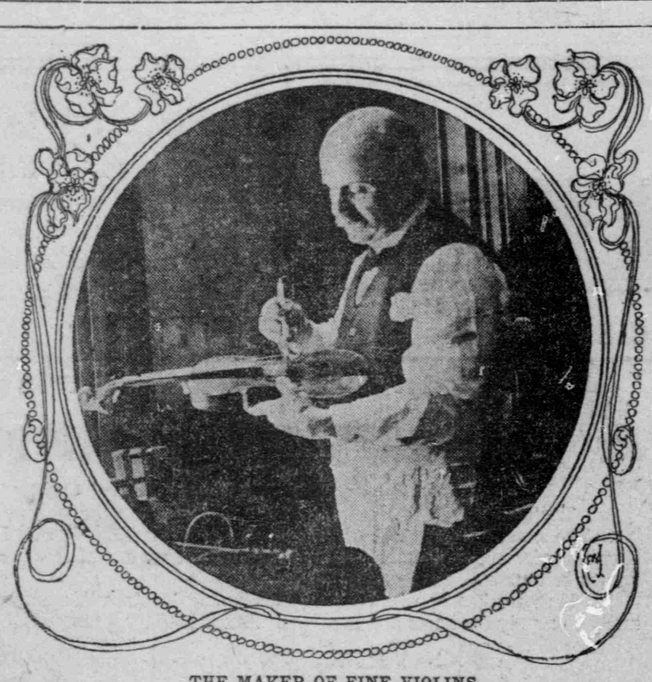
LOCAL POLICEMAN GAINS FAME AS A MAKER OF VIOLINS

Lieut. Tazewell B. Amiss Has a Talent He Turns to Rich Account.

Commander of Tenderloin Precinct Rides His Hobby to Success.

With Grandfather's Fiddle to Strt, Taught Himself the Art.

Artists From Home and Foreign Lands Visit the Washington Officer.



THE MAKER OF FINE VIOLINS.
Lieutenant Amiss Spends His Leisure Time in Manufacture of Instruments.

LIEUT. TAZEWELL B. AMISS,
Police Officer With Gallant Record in War and Peace.

WHEN CRIMINALS ARE FORGOTTEN.
Surrounded by Tools and Glue Pots and Old Fiddles Lieut. Amiss Is Happy.

WASHINGTON is proud of her police force, and Washington's police force, with all its records, traditions, and annals of brave deeds accomplished and clever detective work done in the capture of desperate criminals and the suppression of crime, is proud of Lieut. Tazewell B. Amiss, who, after thirty-five years of continuous service on the force, nearly thirty of which he has put in as commander of No. 1 precinct, is about to attain his well-merited promotion to the rank of captain.

Like many other men who, by merit, perseverance, and long plodding, maintaining through long years of hard work the reputation of spotless integrity amidst temptations and opportunities from which many men would have made themselves independently rich, Lieutenant Amiss will retire from the active control of Washington's tenderloin with an absolutely spotless record and the deepest respect from the business men within the boundaries of his precinct, as well as that of the large population of the "outer fringe of society" over whom he has ruled so long.

It is not, however, as a police officer, a criminologist, a soldier, a farmer, or a philanthropist that Lieutenant Amiss is best known. Locally, of course, among those with whom he has come in contact for so many years, he is well known in all the characters enumerated, but, strange to say, he is a man with a hobby and has ridden it to such good purpose that he has attained wide reputation among musicians, including some of the world's famous virtuosis as an expert violin maker. Utter the word "violin" or "fiddle" to the lieutenant, and you capture his heart. It is the subject he will talk on for hours. He will turn a deaf ear to all attempts to get from him a story of the many deeds of daring he has performed, both on the battlefield and in the quieter but sometimes not less dangerous engagements with desperadoes, but when music is mentioned, and violins are the theme, it strikes and thrills every chord in the lieutenant's heart and his face beams with delight.

As Maker of Violins.

That Lieutenant Amiss has achieved remarkable success in the difficult art of making violins by hand, is more remarkable from the fact that he is self-taught, and has applied himself to the study of his art only in his leisure hours. The patience and perseverance required to master this ancient art is almost incredible. But in the face of all obstacles, and of all preliminary disappointments he has earned fame over and above success. This is due to nothing but close study, indomitable will, and research.

The lieutenant was found one day by a reporter busily engaged in repairing an old violin. He was stripped of his gold braided, buttoned, and epauletted uniform, and in his shirt sleeves, wearing an apron, surrounded by violins in all stages of decay and growth, glue-pots, varnish-pots, brushes, hammers, chisels, and a large assortment of odd looking tools and contrivances, and was fairly reveling in delight over his work. He explained he was "setting a post," which was Greek to the reporter.

"How did I come to make violins?" said the lieutenant; "why, that is a funny story. I was little more than a boy when I came back from the war of the rebellion, and I remembered at my old homestead, my grandfather's farm in Culpeper county, Va., there was an old violin. I wanted it as a memento of the old gentleman. So I got it, and found it was pretty well smashed up. I couldn't play it, and I can't play a violin now, but I started to patch up the old instrument. I took it all apart and put it together again, and somehow when I got through, it had a better tone, fuller, deeper, richer, and sweeter than it ever had before. That set me to studying. I did study—different kinds of wood, different models of violins; and I made several, being successful after a great many attempts.

"However, there is one thing about violin making which is one of its chiefest pleasures, and that is, intense interest and anxiety as to how the instrument will turn out.

Theories of Acoustics.

"You never can tell until it's complete. My first two or three attempts didn't amount to much, so I studied some books on the art, and one or two books on acoustics. The first books taught me a great deal about woods, and the scientific ones about sound waves. Putting the two together, I found that sound in a violin is just the same as in a sounding board, and that the hard streaks in the grain of a wood are the sound conductors. So in picking my next violins, and in scraping down the woods, I scraped down as much of the soft streaks as possible, thus bringing out the hard streaks in the grain of the wood. Then I found that the left hand side of the violin's back should have the grain slanting up the way it grew, and the right hand, or right half of the back, should be the reverse. Then the rings of the grain run outward right and left from the center, and the sound waves thus travel up and around the violin before being emitted, thus increasing not only the volume, but the depth and sweetness of the tone. As soon as I discovered that, I had found the secret of my success. I am not egotistical when I say that I gradually improved, until I have turned out nearly 200 violins, which I have made in my spare time, and for some of which I have received several hundred dollars.

"No, I never cared to make 'cellos,' said the lieutenant, in answer to a question. "I did make one, and I made one viola, and while both of them are pronounced successes, and are in use by professionals, I never troubled to make any more."

Lieutenant Amiss has sold some of his instruments to some of the greatest European masters who have appeared on the American concert stage, and, although he is too modest to admit it, he has received almost as high as $1,000 for one of his instruments.

Artists Pay Him Visits.

For many years past hardly a single violinist of note has visited this country who has not paid a visit to Lieutenant Amiss. He is proud to number among his friends nearly every musical celebrity in Europe, and is better known in musical circles abroad than in the United States.

While Lieutenant Amiss numbers among his friends all these foreign artists, he is well known, also, to many musicians of note in this country, as one of the greatest experts on violins in the United States, but he is not a professional performer. He plays a little, and well, but next to his work and collections of old violins, he is prouder of one of his sons than all his other possessions. His father gave him a thorough musical education, at home and abroad, during which he studied under some of the greatest masters of the day. For a while the younger Amiss achieved considerable success as a professional violinist, but the environments of a professional musician's life became distasteful to him, and he retired from the concert stage to a position in the Ordnance Bureau of the War Department.

The pictures shown are snapshots of Lieutenant Amiss taken in his workshop—and, incidentally, without his permission. While Lieutenant Amiss is intensely reticent as to his record, and will only talk about violins, Major Sylvester, Chief of the Police Department, and his fellow-officers of all rank, are all proud of him.

Comes of Farmer Stock.

He was born in Culpeper county Va., in 1841. He attended school until he was ten years old and then worked on his father's farm for several years, when he went West and located in Saline county, Missouri, where he farmed until 1858. Tiring of the monotony of agriculture he returned to Virginia and started horse dealing, traveling as far south as Alabama, where he located for a while, and being an expert whip, he drove a stage-coach from Greensboro to Tuskaloosa for nearly a year. Then he went on the road as a traveling salesman, selling agricultural implements.

In 1861 he returned to Louisville, Ky., where he enlisted in Company 4, U. S. Artillery, Alexander Hamilton's old company. During the civil war he fought at the battles of Hainesville or Falling Waters, Va.; Winchester, Slaughter Mountain, Antietam, South Mountain, Gettysburg, Chancellorsville, Lookout Mountain, and South Mountain. At Chancellorsville he was seriously wounded several times, but despite orders he continued to fight his gun until he fell, disabled. For his action at that engagement he was specially mentioned in dispatches to General Gary for "heroic bravery."

After being on a furlough for fifteen days, during which he visited a sister in Washington, he returned to his regiment before the expiration of his leave and assisted in the relief of Rosecrans at Chattanooga and in driving Lee from Virginia to Kelly's Ford on the Rappahannock River. At the expiration of three years' service he was honorably discharged from the army, taking his discharge on receiving the news that one of his four brothers, who were fighting on the Confederate side, had been killed before Petersburg.

Gallant Police Record.

On his discharge he returned to Washington in 1864 and was in the employ of the street railway company for four years, when he was appointed on the Capitol police. On March 3, 870, he joined the Metropolitan police as a patrolman. Among the notable arrests he made was that of the notorious "Charley Wood" gang of safe-blowers, which consisted of Wood, J. Secor, alias Burns; Bob Merrill, a notorious Brooklyn burglar, and Charles Lilly, of this city. He caught these men in an alley one night after they had blown open the safe of Robert Fleming & Co., of Pennsylvania Avenue. He hung on to his men until they beat him almost into insensibility with slungshots and left him lying on the ground. He captured all of the desperadoes the following morning.

He was promoted to acting sergeant in 1881, and on December 3, 1886, was promoted to the lieutenancy and command of the First police precinct, which includes several theaters, most of the principal hotels and business houses, and all the night resorts of the seamy side of Washington life. During all the time Lieutenant Amiss has held his command he has never had a complaint made against him. So highly is he held in the esteem of the residents and business men in his district that some years ago, when transfer to another district was contemplated, a unanimous protest was sent to Police Headquarters asking that he be retained.

While he is feared as an officer and strictly enforces the law, he has gained the esteem of the many outcasts in his district, who frequently consult him as a friend, and many a one has taken advantage of his wise counsel, and as many have been recipients of his generosity.

The coming promotion of Lieutenant Amiss to the rank of captain, while a subject of congratulation from his many friends, is regarded with deep regret by those with whom he has been brought in contact in the discharge of his duty and by the men of his present command, by whom he is regarded with esteem amounting almost to affection.

The Ambitious Political Grafter of Today; His Devious Ways and Ingenious Wiles

WHY do many good men shy at running for office and say that they cannot afford it, and why do men who have previously enjoyed a reputation as comparatively honest and decent citizens so often become boodlers when once they get their noses into the public trough?

These and similar questions are frequently asked by the general public, especially that portion of the public which has never taken an active part in politics. They reason that there is a corrupt practices act which places a limit on the campaign expenses of a candidate, and compels him to make a sworn statement of the expenses thus contracted.

The filed statements of the winners after an election do not as a rule show that any great fortunes have been expended in securing the desired offices. The expenses generally include a contributton to the campaign committee, filing fees, and printing, all of which are considered legitimate.

Work of Grafters.

The fact of the matter is that most people have no knowledge of the demands made on all candidates who come out for office by a vast army of "tin horn grafters" who wait and watch with hungry eyes and itching palms for every municipal, state, or national election, and then proceed to go after their victims.

"Minneapolis, for example, is a 'Steffanized' town," says a well-known politician of that city, "and the doings of her former boodling officials have been made known to the entire country through the medium of the public press. All over the country boodling among public officials is cropping out and becoming public.

"The small grafter, however, is generally able to work where he is not seen, and his work very seldom comes to the public notice. The amounts he raises are not individually great, but in the aggregate amount to considerable. These parasites can be prosecuted and made to pay for their work and a plan is now proposed by the better candidates to combine for mutual protection against them.

May Be Prosecuted.

"By laying traps some of them can be caught and the law will attend to the rest. When a few have been placed behind the bars and sent over the road the others will find that honesty, though forced, is not a bad thing after all.

"Many officials have outlined the following schemes, all of which have been tried at various elections in Minneapolis. The 'grafters' have already begun operations for the present campaign, but the greater part of them are waiting for the grand finale when there will be more doing in things political.

"There is no game too small or too big for these people. Anything from a cigar to an automobile will do. I hope the candidates of both parties will unite to fight this evil and after a few prosecutions it will stop."

"'Do I know anything about political grafters?' said another; 'you might as well ask me if I know my own name. I think I know them all, and if I don't, please put me next as soon as possible.

"Here are some of the things I have been up against: I was at one time manager of a campaign for a friend of mine, who was running for a city office. Big men, little men, and all kinds of men would come into our offices and try to skin us out of our eyeteeth.

Needed a Shave.

"For instance, a man came in who needed a shave and general scrubbing about as bad as any man I ever saw in my life. He sat down and told me what a whirlwind vote-getter he was, and stated that he had a whole downtown precinct tied up in his pocket All he wanted for it was beer money for the boys. 'Give me enough to buy beer for the boys and a few cigars for some of the temperance ones, and I'll swing the whole precinct for your man,' he said.

"Every day two or three of that stripe of birds would find their way into the office, and all had things lined up to a finish and wanted a little beer money to keep the line straight. I suppose they could keep a line straight as long as it was up against a bar.

The Letter Game.

"Then there was another gent who had written to about 200 friends all over the city, who had confidence in his judgment and would vote as he directed. To show that he was on the square he had a copy of the letter with him. It was a fine piece of work according to the writer, who was, however, the only person I ever found who could make head or tail out of it.

"He explained that he had been very anxious to lose no time, and had, therefore, mailed the letters at once, paying for the stamps out of his own pocket. He thought that in view of the fact that he had furnished the stationery and had taken all the trouble of writing the letters, that I ought to stand for the stamps. He offered to call it square for $4.50. I asked him for a list of his friends and their addresses, but he explained that he had left them at the office, 'on the piano,' I suppose.

"Another guy came into the office one day and stated that he had traveled all over the town from Washburn Park to Camden Place and had spent a small fortune in car fares. He was sure that he had seen 300 people and had made many votes for us. After telling his story he proceeded to make a strike for the car fares, amounting to $8.65.

Grafters to a Man.

"That fellow had not been outside of the business district for six weeks. He was a cheap sport who used to hang out in front of a cheap gambling joint during the daytime and inside in the evening. The whole bunch were out to play me for a mark. They didn't have even their own votes."

Another grafter who plies his trade during campaigns is the boarding house politician. This species of grafter will approach the candidate and state that he has a boarding house in some part of town, or lives and is the ruling light in some "soup foundry" where there are twenty votes. He controls the entire vote of the house and is willing to sell out for anything he can get. If he can sell it to one side he will then try to sell it to the opposition, and when it comes to delivering the goods will be selling or offering for sale the vote of some other boarding house.

The Ticket Grafter.

"The ticket seller is the most deadly of all the grafters and the most plentiful," said one persecuted officeholder. "I believe that there are raffles and concerts and shows of all sorts arranged solely for the purpose of getting a graft off the man who is foolish enough to run for an office. I have about 2,000 tickets acquired in various campaigns and never saw a show for any of them.

"This ticket graft is the genteel game, and is resorted to by many who appear otherwise fairly decent. But they come in in droves and have tickets for all sorts of things. Dances by the Lightfoot Social Club, benefits for orphans and cripples, dog fights, lawn fetes, church fairs, raffles on anything from a dog to automobile, and so on. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of these people I never saw before, and they never saw me. Because I am running for office I am legal game. Some of them hang on after election."

Subscription Workers.

Another officeholder has been swamped not only by ticket grafters, but by subscription workers. Everything was represented. One well-dressed woman was going to start a cat hospital and from that they ranged to a church that had a mortgage and wanted to pay it off.

"The pastor said they would all vote for me if I would give them $50 to help pay off the mortgage," explained the candidate. "I actually believe that all the mortgaged churches of one denomination waited for that campaign year to pay off their mortgages and then went around to all the candidates on both sides. I know of one man who offered a church vote to me and to my opponent, who was also a good friend of mine.

"We found out his game and both offered to help after he had delivered the goods. I told him to come around if I was elected, and I would help the church out, and the other man did the same. We agreed between ourselves to be on hand in the winner's office when he came and toss him down the stairs. I was elected, and he actually came for his money. We were both on hand to meet him, but he 'crawfished' so beautifully that we let him go with our opinions of him as a minister of the gospel."

Money for Clubs.

"Don't forget the clubs," said another victim. "The club's the thing, and before long the town will be full of them. They will give parties and smokers and feeds, and will then make the rounds of the politicians asking them to pay the bills. The managers will have bills for all the candidates and will collect from as many as possible. Oh, the club is a beauty.

"Then there is the bunch that makes the rounds of all the campaign headquarters and political meetings looking for free cigars and free drinks. They will sell their vote ten times in a night for as many cigars or beers and then very likely not vote at all."

There are hold-ups for money in various amounts and for positions of all sorts. A campaign committeeman who had seen a few things stated that he had lost all confidence in human nature. "I once thought that there was some honesty in the world, but after seeing the gang of 'grafters' that swarmed headquarters with demands for spoil I changed my mind. Some of them were men who would look down on a common thief and thank kind fate that they were different. They were different, for they were infinitely worse.

"Graveyard Graft."

"The graft that strikes most people who are acquainted with it as being the absolute limit is known among the politicians as the 'graveyard graft.' There is a church in Minneapolis which has always made a practice of grafting at every election. They had a little conscience, however, and instead of asking for the money outright would ask the campaign committee to buy a lot in their graveyard. The same lot has been bought over and over and always given back. At the last election, however, one of the committee insisted that it was getting too strong and demanded a deed for the lot. We got the deed and the party now possesses a graft graveyard lot. The church hated to give the deed, but will have to deliver the goods from now on."

"These people are harmless, but are at the same time good bluffers and scare many candidates into producing," said one well-known man. "They never control anything, and if they did would try to sell it to every candidate in sight. They can be killed off and things will be better.

"When a man can make a clean run for office we will see cleaner politics, but when he is obliged to pay most of his first year's salary, and in many cases more, for his election, things are very wrong. When a man of moderate means runs for an office and finds that he has nothing coming for his first year's work, there is a great temptation for him to try to get even.

"Tell the grafters of all sorts that there is nothing doing, and back it up with a few prosecutions and one of the worst evils of our municipal political system will be stopped."

A TRIBUTE TO BACH.

There is a good story in a contemporary about Sir Frederick Bridge and a certain mechanical piano player. He paid a visit to a country house, and found every one in raptures over Bach's Fugue in D minor, as rendered by the tuneful machine. He listened with awe, but quite failed to recognize the work. It turned out, on inquiry, that the piece had been inserted upside down, and had consequently been played backward.—London Globe.

Added Millions for the Veterans Will Swell Pension Bureau Task

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THE approach of our annual Memorial Day always turns the attention of the American people to the unparalleled pension system of the greatest of republics, and especially will this be true this year, when the President's recent sweeping order has added thousands of names to Uncle Sam's pension roll, and will add millions of dollars a month to the nation's expense account. Even under the old conditions no other country on earth had been so prodigal in its bounty to the needy veterans of its war, and now that governmental generosity has taken this new turn there will be literally no comparison between the United States and any other power.

The United States Government has had, as a result of the various wars in which it has been engaged, a list of nearly one million persons to whom it regularly pays pensions, and with the increase in pensioners under the new plan of distribution it is safe to predict that the army of pensioners will be for a long time to come, far above the million mark. Similarly the present annual expenditure for pensions amounting to approximately $137,000,000 a year will be swelled several million dollars a month. It is expected also that there will have to be a heavy increase in the force of employes at the Pension Bureau at the National Capital, which already requires the services of upward of 1,800 workers.

With the exception of the Postoffice Department, probably no other branch of our Government comes directly in contact with so large a portion of the people as does the Pension Bureau. Hardly a community exists anywhere in the land but has one or more persons receiving some small share of Uncle Sam's evidence of gratitude. Not only are pensions paid to former soldiers, but also to widows, children, and dependent relatives of soldiers. The army of pensioners includes survivors of all the wars except the War of the Revolution, and there are on the rolls the names of several women who receive a small income from the Government as a result of services rendered by their male relatives in the struggle of the colonies for independence.

There are widows of generals in the Union army who are drawing pensions ranging as high as $5,000 a year, and totally disabled officers who also receive liberal allowances, but the great mass of the nation's pensioners are paid amounts ranging from $100 down to $6 per month. Indeed, the average of all pensions paid is only about $132 per year. How heavy is the expenditure in the aggregate, however, may perhaps best be appreciated from the fact that since the pension system was established it has cost the Government more than $3,000,000,000.

The one man who more than any other individual, not even excepting the disgruntled taxpayer, is appalled by the present increase in the scope of the work of the Pension Bureau is Eugene F. Ware, the Commissioner of Pensions, an official who has under his direction in Washington and at the pension agencies throughout the country, a force of considerably more than 2,000 employes. Mr. Ware, who owes his present position to personal friendship with President Roosevelt, has been contending for some time past that the work of his office was more than one man could do, and with the new avalanche of business just precipitated, he is ready to throw up his hands in despair.

In speaking the other day of the congested condition of the Pension Bureau, which has been the indirect cause of so many recent complaints from veterans waiting for claims to be passed upon, Commissioner Ware said: "Our work day here in the Pension Office begins at 9 o'clock in the morning and ends at 4:30 o'clock in the afternoon, but there is a steady, constant massive flow of business into the office which far exceeds in volume that which can be handled. The natural result is that our work is never done and never complete. All that we can do is to do each day as much as possible, beginning the next day where we left off the evening before. It is idle for the present to even think of catching up with the work."

Aside from being hopelessly swamped with work the position of Commissioner of Pensions is not altogether a desirable one. For one thing this official receives in his mail each morning more complaining and protesting letters than come to any other of Uncle Sam's chief lieutenants. Many of these communications are pitiable in the extreme. A considerable proportion of the missives, for instance, are from widows who tell heart-breaking stories of sickness and trouble, and perhaps want of food and clothing, with the explanation that if their pensions are withheld or are not increased they must become a public charge with all the attendant sacrifice of pride.

The Pension Commissioner, like every other prominent official in Washington, also has great numbers of personal callers, many of them veterans who persist in presenting their petitions personally and will not be denied. Then, too, all pensions carrying a first payment of $1,000 or over—"back pay" it is commonly designated—must be personally examined by the Commissioner, and this requires the examination of hundreds of claims carrying millions of dollars. During the session of Congress the President requires the Commissioner to report over his own signature upon all pensions allowed by special acts of Congress, and this usually necessitates the preparation of something over a thousand special reports during the few months that the National Legislature is in session.

Like his predecessors in the office, the present Commissioner of Pensions saw service in the civil war. Eugene F. Ware is a native of New England, but has spent most of the sixty-two years of his life in the West. He was educated at a country school at such times as he did not have to work on the farm, and shortly before the war joined an Iowa company of zouaves, which entered the service as a unit when President Lincoln issued his first call for volunteers. After more than five years of army life, Mr. Ware opened a harness shop in Kansas, and, incidentally, wrote poetry, which in time brought him no small degree of fame. Soon after he was admitted to the bar, and then figured as the hero in a pretty little romance, which culminated in his marriage to Jeanette Huntington, a Vassar girl, who had gone West to teach school.

The Pension Office at Washington, the great repository of claims which will henceforth be more crowded than ever, is one of the largest buildings in the country. It occupies nearly two acres of ground, being 400 feet in length. This immense structure, which contains 175 rooms, was patterned by Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs, the architect, after the Farnese Palace, in Florence, Italy, but Congress after spending $1,000,000 on the structure, grew suddenly economical, and the builders were compelled to deviate from the original plans and finish the huge building as best they could.

The organization of the work of the Pension Bureau is characterized by the greatest possible degree of system. Its scope is far-reaching in the extreme. For instance, there are more than 4,000 doctors and specialists employed on its medical boards throughout the country, and its correspondence corps answers each year fully 6,000,000 letters, a sufficient number to extend fully 700 miles, if placed end to end. The millions of documents relating to pensions which are stored in the great fireproof Pension Office are filed in rows upon rows of cabinets, but so perfect is the system that within five minutes after inquiry the entire record of a pension case may be laid before an official or visitor.

QUEEN VICTORIA ON THE VICTORY.

There was probably no one of all those on board the Victory during the King's recent visit who could recall that other day forty years ago—it was the anniversary of Trafalgar—when Queen Victoria paid a similar homage to the memory of our great naval hero. She was returning to Portsmouth with the Prince Consort from a visit of inspection to the Osborne estate, and expressed a wish to see the places where Nelson fell and died. The royal barge was promptly taken alongside the Victory, and her majesty was conducted to the part of the quarterdeck where a brass plate bears the legend, surrounded by a laurel wreath, "Here Nelson fell." The Queen gazed at the inscription for some moments in silence and with tears streaming down her cheeks, and then, plucking a few leaves of laurel from the wreath, asked to be taken down to the cockpit where the great admiral died. As she followed her guides down the ladders into the deep hold of the ship, a too zealous young powder monkey, who was running up with powder for the royal salute, ran "full butt" into her majesty and almost upset her—a misadventure which, she took in excellent part. When she reached the cockpit she stood for several moments in silence, clasping her husband's hand, before the urn which marked the spot where Nelson died; and, in the words of an officer who was present, "so affecting was the emotion she displayed that it brought tears to the eyes of more than one who witnessed it."—London Westminster Gazette.